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Introduction

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Regular and respectful communication with employees is a critical part of effective claims management. Our aim is to support employees through their return to health and, where possible, return to work

Our [claims communication principles](#) are key to supporting effective communication with our employees.

In essence, we aim to always treat all stakeholders with dignity and empathy through supportive communication. Remember that claims processes can be new, scary, and confusing for already sick or injured employees, adding to their mental burden. We aim to work in partnership to support employees through this challenging time.

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Communicating with an employee

A Claims Manager can communicate with an employee in the following ways:

- telephone calls
- emails
- letters sent by mail
- face to face.

Note: It is important to check Pracsys priority comments (VCOMP screen in Pracsys) for the preferred contact method or whether there is an [Act on Behalf of](#), before making contact with an employee.

Communicating with employees by telephone

Communicate by telephone in the first instance

Telephone discussions are Comcare's preferred method of communication. Telephone provides opportunities to take a person-centred approach to building relationships. It allows us to support return to work and health, for example by providing regular updates to employee regarding progress of their claim. For assistance with planning and undertaking an initial conversation with an employee, please refer to the Initial contact with employee call guide.

Provide your direct phone number to employees

A direct phone number will be included on formal written correspondence unless an arrangement is in place as agreed with your Assistant Director. Your direct phone number can also be provided to employees by the Contact Centre.

Verify the identity of the employee

When you receive a phone call to your direct telephone number, you must verify the caller's identity to avoid a potential privacy breach. Refer to the Verifying Caller Identity document for more information.

When a call is received by the Contact Centre, they will verify the identity of the employee. Then they will transfer the phone call to the Claims Manager and advise the name of the caller.

When you make a phone call, you must first confirm that you are speaking to the intended person. Only then can you disclose any personal or sensitive information. If the person answering the phone is not the employee, you can advise that you are calling from Comcare and provide your name. Then you can ask to speak to the intended person. No other information should be disclosed.

Record details of all telephone conversations with employees

For all initial calls with employees, please use the Pracsys initial call record template to document your conversation.

You should record a comment in Pracsys (MCOM, '*Manage Claim Comment*') including:
- the date and time the phone call took place
- details of the query
- response or advice provided

- any actions that you have committed to doing with agreed timeframes
- any other relevant information.

Please be mindful that comments should always be factual, leaving out emotion and/or personal opinions. This is because they could be subject to release outside of internal Comcare processes.

Action call-back requests within 1 business day

Call back requests should be actioned within **one business day**. In some situations, you may need to arrange a suitable time to return a phone call to answer a query. This could include:
- when additional investigation is required to obtain the requested information or
- consultation with other Comcare business areas or external stakeholders is needed to provide a response.

Consider an employee's privacy when leaving a voicemail message

You may leave a message using an employee's voicemail advising of your call and any other relevant information **where the voice message confirms the identity of the employee**. If the voicemail message does not identify the employee, you should advise that you are calling from Comcare and provide your name and contact number. No other information should be disclosed.

Do not consent to an employee recording a phone conversation

An employee may indicate they would like to record a phone conversation. You should not give your consent for the phone conversation to be recorded. You may also advise the employee that you will terminate the call if you believe you are, or may be, being recorded.

If you become aware that an employee has recorded or intends to record a conversation, you should discuss the claim with your Assistant Director.

Communicating with employees by email

Emails are the preferred form of written communication

Formal correspondence, such as determinations or report requests, should be sent to an employee by email.

Emails to employees must be sent from Pracsys

You must send your emails to employees from Pracsys. Sending emails from Pracsys minimises the risk of a privacy breach.

To send an email from Pracsys:
- click on the '*Contacts*' button from within the '*Manage Claim*' screen
- click the email icon next to the relevant email address to compose the email.

To email a letter template:
- use the '*Manage Letter*' function to locate the relevant letter
- select the Print/Email button
- select the Email button to compose the email.

Multiple letters can be sent by selecting the '*Email Folio*' button.

Attempt to obtain an email address from the employee if one is not recorded in Pracsys

If there is no email recorded in Pracsys, you should phone the employee to ask for their preferred email address. Enter the email address into the '*Amend Claim Registration*' function in Pracsys.

Communicating with employees by mail

Although email is the preferred formal communication option, in some circumstances an employee may arrange to receive communication by mail. When sending communication by mail, refer to the below guide to determine which type of mail to use:

Registered post

- medical reports or sensitive material
- documents requested under section 59 of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act)
- when notifying employees of a cessation of entitlements

- where materials being sent include sensitive information such as a lengthy determination with extensive or multiple medical reports and cab vouchers.

Express post
- when faster than standard mail delivery is required, such as
- a request for information under section 58 of the SRC Act where a response is required within a specified timeframe.

Standard post
- all standard correspondence.
- **Posting CDs, DVDs or USBs**
- Before being mailed, all information on the device must be quality checked by an Assistant Director to ensure only relevant information is included. This is to prevent privacy breaches.

Communicating with employees in person

Employees may arrange to meet with their Claims Manager in person at a Comcare office or visit without prior notice. All face-to-face meetings must take place in a safe and confidential environment.

Before agreeing to meet with an employee in person, you must consult with your Director. If the Director agrees to a face to face meeting, you must have a colleague present at the meeting. This is regardless of whether it is a quick meeting at reception, or whether you will be using an interview room.

If you choose to use an interview room, you should advise the Security team prior to the meeting (see Security contacts, or call #50000). Ensure you are familiar with how to use the interview rooms including the security arrangements. The Security team will be able to advise you on this.

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Handling difficult conversations, aggressive, threatening and suicidal persons

At all times, have regard to your wellbeing. We always endeavour to treat everyone with dignity and respect. However, there may be times when an employee or other stakeholder responds to you negatively.

Comcare provides various guides to assist you in handling these situations. See the sections below. There is also a set of more general guides that may help you, designed for all Comcare staff (not just claims management staff):

- Strategies to de-escalate aggressive or distressing situations
- How to deliver an adverse decision
- Self care after a difficult or distressing interaction
- Supporting an employee after a difficult or distressing interaction
- Responding to a suicidal person

Rather than trying to read a lengthy guidance document during a difficult conversation, take some time to familiarise yourself with the guidance before you need it. There are quick-read caller guides available to help you in the moment:

- Aggressive Caller Guide
- Suicidal Caller Guide
- Threatening Caller Guide

Handling and de-escalating difficult conversations

You can access information and advice regarding difficult conversations in the Handling and De-Escalating Difficult Conversations guide. This guide contains prompts and examples relating to claims management.

Responding to aggression

You can access guidance on responding to aggression in the Responding to aggression guide. This guide contains prompts and examples relating to claims management.

Suicidal caller

For quick-referral guidance on responding to suicidal callers, refer to the Claims Management Suicidal Caller guide. Please print and display this guide at your workstation.

Threatening caller guide

For information on responding to callers who threaten you, another Comcare employee or Comcare property, refer to the [Threatening Caller Guide.](#)